



CABINET – 26 MARCH 2024

REVIEW OF THE LIGHTBULB PARTNERSHIP

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to advise the Cabinet of the review of the Lightbulb Partnership and consultation that has taken place with key partners of the Lightbulb Service and to seek approval for a further extension of the Partnership arrangement which is due to end on 31 March 2024.
- 2 The Lightbulb Service provides an integrated housing offer focused on health and wellbeing outcomes and is operated via a partnership between the County Council and district councils.

Recommendations

- 3 It is recommended that:
 - a) The review of the Lightbulb Service and revised draft Business Case for Lightbulb Partnership Arrangements for 2024-26 be noted;
 - b) A further extension of the Partnership arrangement for 12 months from 1 April 2024 be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 4 The County Council has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Blaby District Council which expires on 31 March 2024. This agreement allows a level of delegation of statutory functions of the Local Authority for assessment and provision of services to Blaby District Council as part of the Lightbulb Service and an integration of housing and social care interventions to increase people's independence and optimise their living environments. For this to continue a variation of contract to extend for a further 12 months needs to be in place from April 2024.
- 5 A review of the current arrangements has been undertaken and identified several service and partnership improvements that could be taken forward in the new agreement. The draft options proposed seek to address the current inconsistency of delivery across the county and make the most of opportunities to include more joint service provision in the way of minor adaptations.

- 6 Alongside the Partnership review an independent review was commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council and recommendations made regarding the future delivery model.
- 7 The Partnership has agreed to request an extension of the current agreement to allow further consideration and test of feasibility for service improvements recommended in the Charnwood review. Scoping of actions needed to transfer the Adaptations Service from the County Council to the Lightbulb Service has begun with the expectation that this will take place in 2024/25.
- 8 Charnwood Borough Council has agreed to contribute towards the total costs over the next 12 months.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 9 The proposed 12 month extension needs to be agreed by each district council.
- 10 If recommendations are agreed by all partners, then transition to the delivery model will commence, if recommendations are not agreed then arrangements for Charnwood Borough Council to exit the Lightbulb Service will be agreed over the next six months.
- 11 An extension for 12 months needs to be in place from 1 April 2024 with a view to a future model and new SLA to be in place for April 2025.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 12 In October 2017, the Cabinet agreed the delegation of Adult Social Care functions to be undertaken under the Lightbulb Service pathway to Blaby District Council. The Service was rolled out to all Leicestershire districts in October 2017.
- 13 The County Council's SLA with Blaby District Council expires on 31 March 2024.
- 14 The relevant business case is the Draft Business Case for Lightbulb Partnership Arrangements 2024-2026, attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 15 On 19 December 2023, the Cabinet noted the review of the Lightbulb Service and draft Business Case for Lightbulb Partnership Arrangements for 2024-2026 and approved the 'All in' option. However, it was agreed that a further report be presented to the Cabinet to approve the revised Business Case and alternative options in the event of there being a lack of consensus from the Partnership authorities on the implementation of the 'All in' option.

Resource Implications

- 16 The County Council's contribution to the Lightbulb Service is £494,000 in 2023/24.

- 17 The transfer of the Adaptations Service from the County Council to the Lightbulb Service will amount to a saving of £300,000 from 2025/26 for the costs of equipment and additional savings if staff costs are also able to transfer.
- 18 In addition to its contribution shown above, the County Council pays a contribution to Blaby District Council for DFG administration staff cover. In 2023/24 this was £25,400.
- 19 The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 20 This report will be circulated to all members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

- 21 The Lightbulb Service provides an integrated housing offer focused on health and wellbeing outcomes, such as maximising independence in the home and preventing falls.
- 22 The Service brings together a range of practical housing support into a single service providing a proactive, targeted approach via health and social care professionals. The model allows for early assessment and triage of housing issues. Lightbulb operates a hub and spoke model with a central hub and integrated locality Lightbulb teams in each district council area (excepting Charnwood) offering:
- Minor Adaptations.
 - Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).
 - Wider Housing support needs (warmth, energy, home security).
 - Housing-related health and wellbeing (Assistive Technology), falls prevention).
 - Planning for the future (Housing options).
 - Housing-related Information and Advice.
- 23 The review of the draft Business Case, attached as Appendix A to this report, encompasses the following areas:
- a) Opportunity to revise the SLAs, to look at any developments in the offer, and/or service efficiencies i.e., consider amalgamating of further services.
 - b) Current financial pressures and cost saving opportunities.
 - c) Opportunity for collective smarter procurement practices such as bulk buying and common supplier list.
 - d) Development of more flexible DFG solutions.
 - e) Sharing good practice and process improvement.
 - f) Opportunities to engage in a consistent single dialogue with social housing providers regarding the delivery of home adaptations in their stock to ensure this offer is better aligned with that for homeowners.
 - g) Continued customer insight work to identify service gaps and deliver countywide improvement.
 - h) Improving the self-service offer for practical housing support.
 - i) Embedding a new Assistive Technology offer as part of the Housing MOT.
 - j) Work towards further prevention work with the existing green homes, assistive technology and safe spaces pilots and integration into business as usual.
 - k) Review of the Business Case with Children and Family Services included.
- 24 For this current Business Case proposal, the demand totals for Housing Support Co-ordinators (HSC) cases, Occupational Therapy (OT) cases and DFGs have been evaluated and adjusted based on average service workload for the last four years of operation alongside the population of over 65's for 2020. Population numbers have been included in this refresh as it was

included in the demand calculations for the original business case. Demand distribution across the districts remains largely unchanged.

- 25 Following the start of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, the demand on the HSC service dropped considerably; there was also a small drop in demand on Technical Officers and an increased demand on OT services. Following the pandemic OT and Technical Officers demand appears to have returned to their pre-pandemic levels.

Charnwood Borough Council

- 26 Charnwood Borough Council currently contributes to the Hub element of Lightbulb and manages its locality team internally. The original model was set up with the plan for full Charnwood integration to the model long term.
- 27 This full integration is required to ensure parity across all districts, but currently Charnwood Borough Council residents do not get the same 'Lightbulb' offer. There are often peaks in case work. However Charnwood is unable to share the case work with other locality teams, which results in regular one-off interventions at an additional cost to Charnwood Borough Council or Lightbulb, or both.
- 28 Charnwood Borough Council commissioned an independent review of the Lightbulb Service delivered for Charnwood. The report, attached as Appendix B, acknowledged that there are many great elements of Lightbulb's approach, in particular:
- The role of the HSC, the Housing MOT and staff being based at a district level undertaking assessments as one individual team.
 - The additional resilience gained through having a larger team and being able to redistribute resources.
 - The benefits of the central hub, providing efficiencies in back functions.
 - The single strategic voice with integrated care system partners.
- 29 However, the report also stated that neither the current services provided by Charnwood Borough Council or Lightbulb provide a service that provides complete client centred support in a full end-to-end process.
- 30 Therefore, the review recommended the consideration of Lightbulb moving to a Housing Improvement Agency model and a building works framework for providers.
- 31 If Charnwood Borough Council chooses not to fully commit or continue to be part of the Lightbulb Service, this will have a significant impact on the Service as a whole, as this will reduce the financial contributions made to the Service by the County Council, because the Adults and Communities Department would need to use a proportion of its contribution to fund an alternative arrangement for the Charnwood area.

Options for the Service

- 32 Based on the data available, it is recommended that the SLAs in place currently are extended for 12 months with a review at the end of six months which will allow further insight into:
- The demand on the County Council OT service following the integration of children and young people's services within the adult OT service.
 - Monitoring the long-term effects of the pandemic on workflow.
 - Gaining a greater understanding of the demand on the OT service following service redesign.
 - Further investigation into the pilot work and their efficiencies on the wider economy.
 - Being able to realise actual savings to adult social care.
- 33 The County Council has agreement from the Partnership that the minor adaptations service currently provided by the County Council be fully integrated into the Lightbulb Service, either on the basis of a transfer of service or the service continuing as is, but being funded and co-ordinated through Lightbulb. The forecast saving to the County Council of £300,000 for equipment costs and further savings if staffing costs are able to be funded.
- 34 If Charnwood Borough Council withdraws from the model, there are several potential options which each have their own cost implications. These are being considered by finance colleagues but would have a significant impact on the current County Council OT arrangements, which would require a separate service model delivery for Charnwood residents. This would increase costs for the County Council and would have to be found from the current contribution to Lightbulb.
- 35 Given the current financial position, any option which does not include cost savings to the County Council is unacceptable.

Consultation

- 36 No formal public consultation is needed in connection with the review. However the views of people who use the services and partner agencies have been gathered as part of the Business Case review and are set out in Appendix A.
- 37 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6 November 2023 welcomed the Lightbulb Service Business Case and supported an 'All in' in option as the preferred approach. This involved minor adaptations transferring from the County Council to the core Lightbulb model with a view to Charnwood Borough Council fully adopting the service model. The Committee also asked that the Cabinet make representation to Government seeking a change in the rules to allow for more flexibility in how local authorities could use Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) monies to better support residents.

Conclusions

- 38 The Lightbulb partnership arrangement is one to be celebrated as a nationally recognised model that brings together housing partners and the Local Authority Adult Social Care OT support to the residents of Leicestershire.
- 39 The current arrangements include the delegation of powers to Blaby District Council as the host for the service on behalf of the County Council's Adults and Communities Department.
- 40 The County Council is the major financial contributor to the service, and in addition provides a team of Occupational Therapists to work alongside the Lightbulb staffing.
- 41 The Lightbulb Service has been running since October 2017 and the SLAs are due to be refreshed and signed in April 2024. This provides an opportunity to review service delivery following further health and social care integration, the introduction of additional grants and a new ways of working post the pandemic.
- 42 Should Charnwood Borough Council choose not to fully commit or continue to be part of the Lightbulb Service, this would have a significant impact on the Service as the County Council would need to use a proportion of its contribution to fund alternative arrangements for Charnwood Borough Council.

Equality Implications

- 43 There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The current arrangements have been subject to Equality Impact Assessments and the final Business Case will include a refresh of all appropriate Impact Assessments.

Human Rights Implications

- 44 There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

- 45 Lightbulb brings together resources within local Councils and NHS partners to ensure people can get the right level and type of support at the right time to help prevent, delay or reduce the need for on-going support and maximise their independence.
- 46 DFGs are funded through the Better Care Fund and managed within Lightbulb to encourage areas to think strategically about the use of home adaptations and technologies to support people in their own homes and to take a joined up approach to improve outcomes across health, social care and housing.
- 47 Agreement of a revised Business Case and an agreed future funding model is essential if the Partnership is to continue.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Draft Business Case for Lightbulb Partnership Arrangements 2024-2026
- Appendix B – Charnwood Council Lightbulb Review

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet: 10 October 2017 – Delegation of Adult Social Care Functions to Blaby District Council (Lightbulb Programme) – Urgent Action by the Chief Executive <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=4864> (item 52)

Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2023 “Lightbulb Service Business Case” and minutes of that meeting – <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=1040&Mid=7110&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet: 19 December 2023 – Review of the Lightbulb Partnership <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=7081>